

Statement on International Education Week 2013

Secretary of State John Kerry

Washington, DC

Greetings and happy 14th annual International Education Week.

I can't tell you how many world leaders that I meet the course in my travels who tell me how fondly they remember studying at an American university and the connection that as a result of that they have felt to the United States ever since.

International education creates lifelong friendships between students and it strengthens the bonds between nations.

These connections are especially helpful in diplomacy, which is rooted, as we all know, in relationships between people and which seeks to develop those relationships between countries.

When the challenges that we face today--whether climate change, youth unemployment, global health--transcend borders, international education becomes even more vital. We need the leaders and innovators of tomorrow and tomorrow's learning, communicating and confronting challenges across borders.

International Education prepares our youth for the globalized 21st century workforce, whatever the field of study someone may choose.

Students with experience overseas gain the skills, they gain self-reliance and they gain a worldview that they need in order to compete in a global economy.

Close to 300,000 Americans study abroad during their college career, and nearly one million international students pursue their studies in the United States.

I could tell you the street to my hometown, Boston, are filled with his collegiate visitors and their native tongues are blending now with our very special local accent.

These students, and others like them around the country, contribute more than \$22 billion dollars to the US economy each year and they create a strong bond with our nation that lasts for years to come.

While these numbers a good, I think we can do better particularly right here at home.

As Secretary of State, I call upon all U.S. universities students faculty and administrators to prioritize international education.

We need to work together to make study abroad, whether it's in person or even virtual, to make it a reality for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or field of study.

So we need to connect our campuses with universities overseas, so that Americans can learn from their peers globally recognized scholars.

Let's make sure that everything we teach in our classrooms, whether it's political science and neuroscience, that all of it, integrates a global perspective.

International students comprise 3.5 percent of all those enrolled in our universities, the same share they actually represented back in the year 2000.

So to make sure that our universities keep pace with the world's changes in meet the modern needs of our students.

We need to be on top of our game.

We need stronger and more successful programs at a much greater level of exchange.

From all the people that I had met throughout my career I can tell you--I met prime ministers, foreign ministers, environment ministers, finance ministers--all of them, who remember fondly the fact that they studied once abroad, whether in the United States or elsewhere, and the difference it made to their outlook.

So no matter where we're from, we share the same basic aspirations for education and for opportunity.

We all want to know that a better future is within our reach.

International Education helps to make that future a reality.

So this week, as we celebrate what international education provides students, let's recommit, all of us, to even greater exchange in the years to come.

Believe me it will make all the difference. Thank you.